

Communication Plan: Hurricane Maria Disaster Response

Issue:

To inform of the Corps' disaster response mission through news coverage of Corps employees' deployment to Puerto Rico immediately following Hurricane Maria.

residents of Puerto Rico, members of Congress, Corps stakeholders, Corps family members, and members of the U.S. public

Messages:

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is prepared and ready to respond to natural and human-made disasters and overseas contingencies. When disasters occur, USACE teams and other resources are mobilized from across the country to assist our local districts and offices to deliver our response missions.
- USACE serves as the lead agency to respond with public works and engineering support and to coordinate long-term infrastructure recovery.
- The Corps' number one mission is to do all we can to ensure the health and safety of those who have been impacted by the disaster.
- In any disaster, USACE's three top priorities are:
 - Support immediate life-saving and life-safety emergency response priorities;
 - Sustain lives with critical temporary emergency power and other needs;
 - Initiate recovery efforts by assessing and restoring critical infrastructure.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to perform its important day-to-day missions at home and abroad in support of the Nation and its Armed Forces while providing support for disasters.

Target Audiences:

1. Residents of Puerto Rico
2. Leadership – Senior DoD leadership, members of Congress and other political and civic leaders
3. National, regional and local commercial media outlets and representatives
4. Family members of deployed Corps personnel
5. General U.S. public, especially those who reside in Puerto Rico or have family and/or friends in Puerto Rico

Helping external audiences to understand the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' role in disaster responses. Some audiences may resist messages or respond negatively due to belief that the Corps is not proactive enough or may refer to negative news articles of the Corps' release of water from Houston-area reservoirs following Hurricane Harvey. Maximum transparency will go a long way to sustain or increase the target audiences' positive support of this particular USACE mission.

Media:

- News releases posted to the USACE, South Atlantic Division and Mobile District public websites and/or Army.mil and released to other outlets as appropriate
- An average of at least once daily social media posts on the Mobile District Facebook page and Twitter feed (shared and retweeted by Division and USACE HQ)
- Senior leader (District Commander) media engagement with national and international media outlets
- Timely responses to media and public queries
- Pitches to key media outlets on USACE missions and milestones, subject-matter expert interviews to highlight the people behind the projects
- Media opportunities and events at key milestones (i.e., first Blue Roof installation; 100th generator installation; coordination/partnership with local agencies
- Coordination with FEMA and local agencies to accomplish communication objectives through media and public affairs news coverage.

Products, events and supporting strategic messaging (i.e., talking points, Qs &As, public affairs guidance) synched across invested organizations (i.e., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs; JFLCC Public Affairs; South Atlantic Division Public Affairs; FEMA External Affairs; and other response organizations) to assure unity of effort and "speaking with one voice."

Desired effects:

Throughout the first 30 days of the disaster response deployment to Puerto Rico, provide a steady flow of information via social media, Corps-produced news releases, and external news stories to illustrate the USACE disaster-response mission through the Hurricane Maria disaster response activities.

1. Increase understanding of USACE's disaster-response mission.
2. Increase goodwill toward USACE and build stakeholder relationships.
3. Increase support and resources for USACE's missions and projects.
4. Increase recognition of the USACE brand and this particular aspect of the command's unique mission and relevance among audiences, key influencers and stakeholder groups.
5. Recognize the unique missions and composition of USACE districts, which are comprised mostly of civilian employees who volunteer to deploy to disaster responses.

Metrics:

Production/frequency across span of move timeline (minimum):

Media pitches/media advisories to promote the RFO's significant events/milestones, resulting in at least one positive national and/or regional news story each week for the first month of the recovery mission.

At least one senior leader engagement each week during the first month of the recovery mission, either a press conference, stakeholder engagement or media interview.

At least one news release/news story each week to illustrate the Corps' role in disaster recovery and/or recovery milestone.

On average, one social media post each day showcasing the RFO staff and mission successes.

Measures of effectiveness:

Marked increase in awareness of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' disaster response mission as illustrated through positive news stories on the Corps' role in Hurricane Maria response and positive comments, shares and feedback from social media posts.